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Message Text

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ACTION XMB-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 EB-08 IGA-02 MC-02 /025 W
----------191930Z 008379 /41
R 190805Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7151
USDOC WASHDC

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DEPT. PLEASE PASS EX-IM

E.O. 11652: DECON 31 MARCH 1979
TAGS: BENC, ETEL, BTIO, MR
SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: SITUATION REPORT ON TENDER FOR EARTH STATIONS, MICROWAVE LINKS AND TELEPHONE LINK

REF: (A) NOUAKCHOTT 166, (B) NOUAKCHOTT 380

1. ON MARCH 17 GIRM AUTHORITIES OFFICIALLY EXTENDED BIDDING PERIOD FOR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT FOR TWO MONTHS, WITH CLOSING DATE FOR BIDS NOW SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 30. CMRENT STATUS OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THIS PROJECT IS AS FOLLOWS: (A) TWO AMERICAN FIRMS HAVE THUS FAR SHOWN INTEREST IN BIDDINLFN PROJECT: HARRIS CORPORATION AND GENERAL TELEPHONE AND ELECTRONICS. (1) AFTER INITIAL EXPLORA-TORY VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT IN EARLY FEBRUARY, HARRIS CORP. SUR-VEY TEAM UNDERTOOK ON-SITE INSPECTION OF LOCATIONS INVOLVED (INCLUDING DAKHLA IN GIRM'S NEW TIRIS AL-GHARBIA REGION) WITH ASSISTANCE OF GIRM MINISTRY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS. SUR-VEY WAS COMPLETED MARCH 17, HARRIS HAS APPOINTED LOCAL AGENT (DR. BOUBACAR ALPHA BA) VIA CONTRACT TO REPRESENT ITS INTERESTS IN MAURITANIA. TEAM CUPORTS HARRIS PLANS TO SUBMIT FORMAL BID AT PROPITIOUS TIME IN NEAR FUTURE. (2) GTE REPS VISITED NOUAKCHOTT IN EARLY MARCH. AFTER INITIAL DISINTEREST,
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GTE WAXED MORE ENTHUSIASTIC AND DE-
CIDED COMMIT FUNDS REQUIRED TO PREPARE BID IF THEY COULD OBTAIN EXTENSION OF DEADLINE (WHICH THEY PLANNED TO SEEK THROUGH GIRM EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON). REP OUT OF BOSTON OFFICE HAS SINCE CABLED EMBASSY THAT GTE PLANS TO SEND SURVEY TEAM TO MAURITANIA BEFORE END OF MONTH. (B) THOMPOSON CSF (FRENCH) HAS ALREADY COMPLETED SURVEY OF

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PROJECT AND FORMAL BID IS CERTAIN. (C) DIRECTOR OF
GIRM PTT STATES HE HAS RECEIVED NOTIFICATION THAT JAPA-
NESE (NIPPON) AND WEST GERMAN (SIEMENS) FIRMS PLAN TO
BEGIN SURVEYS FOR PROJECT IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. REQKLODSDOC INFORH PERTINENT US FIRMS OF TWO-MONTH
EXTENSION PERIOD FOR THIS PROJECT WITHOUT CONVEYING PRO-
GRESS ALREADY MADE BY HARRIS CORP. AND GTE.

3. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT MAJOR REASON FOR EX-
TENSION OF BIDDING ON PROJECT WAS RELATED TO GIRM CONCERNS
REGARDING INTERNATIONAL FINANCING. AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN
ALREADY INVOLVED WITH PROJECT ARE CONVINCED THAT MOST IM-
PORTANT, AND PROBABLY DECISIVE, INGREDIENT OF FORMAL BID
WILL BE FINANCIAL PACKAGE ASSEMBLED BY COMPANY COMPETING
FOR PROJECT CONTRACT. IN THIS REGARD, AMERICAN PRIVATE
FIRMS ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO BE COM-
PETITIVE AGAINST OTHER FIRMS (FRENCH CERTAINLY AND PROBABLY
JAPANESE AND WEST GERMAN) WHO WILL BE AFFORDED
SOLID FINANCIAL BACKING BY THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS.
ASIDE FROM FINANCIAL GUARANTEES, AMERICANS ALSO CITE
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSURANCES GIRM OFFICIALS PERCEIVE IN
GOVERNMENTAL INVOLVEMENT. GIVEN LOCAL TUATION AS IT
SEEMINGLY CURRETLY EXISITS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE PRELI-
MINARY READING ON EX-IM WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT EFFORTS
OF AMERICAN FIRMS TO OBTAIN CONTRACT FOR 26 MILLION
DOLLAR MAURITANIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT
EITHER VIA DIRECT FINANCIAL INVOLVEMENT OR VIA GUARANTEE
SUPPORTING U.S. COMMERCIAL BANK(S) (CITIBANK IS ALREADY
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STUDYING PROJECT AND PROSPECTS). SINCE EX-IM PARTICI-
PATION (FINANCING OR GUARANTEE) MAY BE ONLY WAY AMERICAN
FIRM CAN PUT TOGETHER COMPETITIVE FINANCIAAPACKAGE AND
THUS EFFECTIVELY CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL FIRMS, WE HOPE
EX-IM WILL BE AS RESPONSIVE AND FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE
TO REQUESTS FROM ASPIRING US FIRMS, NOTING THAT PROJECT
IS MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING AND CONTRACT WILL
BE SIGNED BY GIRM PTT MINISTRY. DESIUTE CHECKERED HIS-
TORY OF GIRM/EXIM RELATIONS IN EXIM-FINANCED SUGAR RE-
FINERY PROJECT, SOME SENIOR GIRM OFFICIALS NOW REGARD
PROSPECTS OF EXIM FINANCING IN VERY POSITIVE LIGHT.
FACT THAT PAINFUL LEARNING PROCESS ASSOCIATED WITH
GIRM'S FIRST-EVZX EXIM LOAN (AND FIRST-EVER USE OF
LETTERS OF CREDIT, BANK GUARANTEES, ETC.) IS STILL VERY
FRESH IN LOCAL MINDS, SHOULD MAKE NEGOTIATING AND
SERVICING SECOND LOAN/GUARANTEE IN NEXT FEW MONTHS
MUCH EASIER. FINALLY, STANDARD EXIM BUY97;348:-, 4317843-
MENT WILL INSURE ON-SHORE PROCUREMENT BY U.S. BIDDERS.
HANDYSIDE

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Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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